



SFIA - Continual Personal Development from the Classroom to the Workplace

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Background

Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA)

- “ High level UK Government backed competency framework describing the roles within IT and the skills needed to fulfil them”
- Devised and completed in 2000 and launched at the DTI conference in 2001.
- Latest release SFIA v4 December 2008.
- Purpose to provide “a standardised view of the wide range of professional skills needed by people working in Information Technology”



Why is SFIA important

- IT skills standard providing a common reference model of IT professional skills; adopted by UK Government and many organisations
- Gained industry-wide recognition and support from : e-skills, BCS - Chartered Institute of IT, IET, IMIS, Intellect, OGC, itSMF and the BIS. In use in over 100 countries
- Allows employers to measure the skills they have against the skills they need and identify skill gaps
- Quantifies the skills of the IT labour market
- Regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current industry needs
- SFIAplus adds information on development, qualifications, etc



Who uses SFIA and why

- Government Departments and Large Organisations e.g.
 - ✓ HM Revenue and Customs
 - ✓ AVIVA formerly Norwich Union Life
 - ✓ Crown Prosecution Service
 - ✓ Leeds City Council
- Consistent and evolving framework of skills used for defining job roles in the workplace, skills gap analysis , personal development, succession planning
- Supported developed and enhanced under the watchful eyes of BCS Chartered Institute for IT, e-skills uk, IET, IMIS and itSMF



Innovation in the Curriculum @ The University of Northampton

- **Awarded Innovation of the Year 2008 by the itSMF as first in the world to offer MSc Service Management**
- **Customer lead and industry aware providers**
- **Accreditation given for ITIL Qualifications**
- **Academic choice of students from around the world including BT, BBC, European Central Bank, HP, IBM, National Audit Office, Ministry of Defence, Prudential, Universities, Roche, Serco, Ministry of Justice, NHS, National Police Forces, Councils, World Food Programme.**
- **First to align Learning Outcomes of Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes to SFIA skills**



Why align SFIA to the Curriculum

People are autonomous

- Carry with them through their working life
 - ✓ skills
 - ✓ qualifications
 - ✓ experience
- Education should provide skills to underpin their working life
- Aligning the learning outcomes of degree programmes to a skills framework like SFIA is a



Win Win solution




How to put SFIA in to the Curriculum

- Analyse Learning outcomes
- Compare and align to SFIA grid – <http://scripts.bcs.org/sfiaplus/sfia.htm>
- Set assessed work to prove the Learning Outcomes and therefore skills have been achieved
- Draw up a grid of SFIA skills obtained at
 - ✓ Module level
 - ✓ Programme level
- Provide students with the defined set of SFIA skills attained
- Keep abreast of changes and continually up to date delivery



SFIA grid



Category/SubCategory	Skill	Code	Level						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strategy and architecture									
Information Strategy	Corporate governance of IT	GOVN						6	7
	Information Management	IRMG				4	5	6	7
	Information systems coordination	ISCO						6	7
	Information policy formation	DPRO					5	6	
	Information security 	SCTY			3	4	5	6	
	Information assurance	INAS			3	4	5	6	
	Information analysis	INAN				4	5	6	
	Information content publishing	ICPM		2	3	4	5	6	



University of Northampton model

SFIA CODES	No of incidences All courses	Level 4 UG	Level 5 UG	Level 5 UG	Level 5 UG	Level 5 UG	Level 6 UG	Level 6 UG	Level 7 PG
		Computer Solutions	Service Management	Human Factors	Quality & Security Management	Design and Consultancy	Project Management	Advanced Databases	Access and Event Management
DESN (Systems design)	10					4		4	
IRMG (Information Management)	7		4						4
SCTY Information security	6		3		3			4	4
SINT Systems Integration	2	2					3		
UNAN Usability Requirements Analysis	3			4					



Win Win

- Embeds a professional industry lead framework into the curriculum
- Addresses the skills gap at the early stages in the education journey and is sustainable from UG to PhD
- Enhances current skill set of:
 - ✓ communication skills;
 - ✓ groupwork skills;
 - ✓ information skills;
 - ✓ problem solving;
 - ✓ use of IT;
 - ✓ application of number
-With an industry related skills set - SFIA

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Linking to Relaunching of BCS as Chartered Institute of IT?

BCS Values state

- “We pledge to:
 - ✓ Think ahead and focus on action by putting things in place to meet the future needs of all our stakeholders.
 - ✓ Be open and work together by sharing best practice and encouraging collaboration between our members, customers and the industry.
 - ✓ Drive progress and enable change by advancing the role of IT in bettering society, the economy, business and education. ” (BCS CIIT 2009)
- Consider highlighted text – is there a meeting of minds
- Common goals , common values, common framework SFIA



Does this step change relate to Leitch and e-skills agenda

- The Leitch report (2006) which is a roadmap directing the UK “towards World Class Skills by 2020”. Universities have tended to concentrate on the academic skills, but this initiative encompasses the spirit of the Leitch report and maps, embeds and **aligns relevant employer defined skills** to module Learning Outcomes whilst still maintaining academic integrity
- e-skills advocate the need within the UK to develop IT professionals “whose skills and capabilities are **easy to identify**, and whose ongoing development will enable them to continue to succeed in a fiercely competitive global market



Further Work at The University of Northampton

- Evolving course content to reflect industry needs
- Refining transcript for graduating students
- Realigning to include new SFIPlus4 skills e.g. governance
- Link to new SFIPlus4 grid
- <http://scripts.bcs.org/sfiplus/sfia.htm>
- Attracting more students to the Business Computing and Service Management Field



Future?

- Alignment to SFIA skills in schools?
- Government lead initiative to roll out the SFIA framework across all education and training providers of IT courses –public and private sector?
- Global roll out?
- Slow steady and consistent acquirement of skills wins the race !!





Useful Links and references

- SFIA websites
 - ✓ Home page: <http://www.sfia.org.uk/>
 - ✓ Overview chart
http://www.sfia.org.uk/public/File/SFIA_Foundation/SFIA_documentation/sfia3-char.pdf
 - ✓ IT professional Competency : http://www.e-skills.com/public/File/SFIA_Foundation/SFIA_IPCM_web4.pdf
 - ✓ Introducing SFIA handbook
http://www.sfia.org.uk/public/File/SFIA_Foundation/SFIA_documentation/sfia3-intro.pdf

University of Northampton- Business Computing Courses and MSc IT Service Management :

- <http://www2.northampton.ac.uk/portal/page/portal/business/nbs-courses/business-compsystems-bsc>
- <http://www2.northampton.ac.uk/portal/page/portal/business/nbs-courses/it-service-management-msc>